



Policy on Occupational Safety and Health University of Ruhuna

Approved by the Senate at its 389th meeting held on 27th March 2024

Approved by the Council at its 448th meeting held on 08th August 2024

1. Objective

The objective of this policy is to define the University's commitment to providing a safe and healthy working and learning environment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, and other personnel at locations under the management or control of the University.

3. Policy

3.1. The University is committed to:

(a) create an accessible health and safety management system that eliminates or minimizes the risk of injury or illness to people associated with the University's operations;

(b) engage with all staff, students, visitors and partner organizations in creating safe working and learning environments and safe systems of work;

(c) develop and maintain a culture that encourages all personnel to actively manage health and safety risks;

(d) provide a continually improving health and safety management system by establishing, and monitoring progress towards measurable objectives and targets aimed at eliminating work-related illness and injury; and

(e) establish a health and safety management framework to meet legislative obligations to the highest possible standard.

3.2. The University is committed to complying with all relevant health and safety legislation and other requirements to which the University subscribes.

3.3. The University operates a health and safety management system that is consistent with the nature and scale of its operations.

3.4. The University provides appropriate health and safety training for all staff, and disseminates health and safety information and instruction to all personnel in the workplace.

3.5. The University engages and includes staff in a consultation process for decision making where there is an impact on workplace health and safety.

3.6. The University defines, documents and communicates health and safety responsibilities, authority to act, and reporting requirements for personnel at all levels in the workplace.

3.7. The University actively identifies and manages health and safety risks, through the systematic identification of hazards, evaluation of risks and implementation of effective risk controls.

3.8. The University promptly reports hazards, incidents and injuries, investigates where appropriate, and implements control measures to eliminate or minimize the risk of recurrence.

4. Procedural principles

The University's approach to the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, students, contractors and visitors engaged in University activities is guided by the following general principles.

4.1. The University acknowledges that the health, safety, and wellbeing of its people is paramount;

4.2. The University provides and supports an environment for work and study where people can thrive and flourish;

4.3. The University aims to demonstrate leadership in occupational health, safety and wellbeing and the need for global consistency across all sites using best practice frameworks in occupational health safety and wellbeing;

4.4. The University provides and supports services, programs and initiatives to empower staff and students to meet their responsibilities and contribute to fostering an inclusive, participative and consultative culture of safety, good health, and wellbeing;

4.5. The University communicates and consults with staff, students and employee representatives on University activities impacting their physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing;

4.5. The University commits to fulfil its legal and other requirements;

4.6. The University commits to eliminate hazards and reduce occupational health risks, including the risk of injuries, diseases and ill health resulting from University activities;

4.7. The University monitors and reviews its performance at all levels to continuously improve the management of health, safety and wellbeing.

5. Responsibilities

5.1. University Council

- a. University Council has ultimate responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing across the University, including responsibility for ensuring that an effective and up-to-date health and safety policy is in place.
- b. University Council will ensure the necessary resources are made available for the effective implementation of the policy.

5.2. Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor is delegated overall responsibility by University Council for:

- a. Providing clear and visible leadership on health, safety and wellbeing.
- b. Ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and wellbeing of the University's members of staff, students and others affected by its activities.
- c. Appointing personnel to provide the necessary competent assistance and advice on matters of health, safety and wellbeing.
- d. Establishing and maintaining mechanisms for effective consultation and cooperation on matters of health, safety and wellbeing.
- e. Providing final decision on health, safety and wellbeing matters where resolution cannot be achieved through consultation and cooperation.
- f. Ensuring the development and continued implementation of the University's health and safety policy.

5.3. Deputy Vice-Chancellor

In the absence of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor is assigned the responsibilities detailed at 5.2.

5.4. Deans

Deans have overall responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing within their faculties.

Deans must ensure that suitable and sufficient organizational and management arrangements are in place to deliver successful health and safety management within their faculties as it relates to all:

- a. Members of staff, students and others using its facilities or affected by its activities.
- b. Work, teaching and research-related activities under the faculty's control.
- c. Areas and facilities assigned to the faculty; and
- d. Work, teaching and research-related equipment and materials used, or acquired for use

5.5. Heads of the Departments

Heads of the Departments must:

- a. provide leadership on health and safety
- b. ensure that their areas of control and responsibility meet statutory and University safety policies and arrangements
- c. ensure the allocation of the necessary resources (physical and human) – appoint a safety officer in each department (for one year period)
- d. ensure the training of staff and students on safety issues and management
- e. make sure that appropriate arrangements are in place for ensuring the health and safety competence and capability of their employees and the University's minimum requirements for health and safety training are met
- f. ensure the preparation, annual review and authorization of the organization and arrangements for managing health and safety
- g. ensure the identification of hazards (for which they are the risk owner), assessment and review of significant risks and ensure the planning, implementation, monitoring, recording (e.g. a safety risk register and profile) and review of measures to control those risks arising from the activities of their department

5.6. Academic Staff

Academic staff (including researchers) and staff with teaching responsibilities must

- a. assess the risks of the work under their control including:
 - a. ensuring risk assessments are completed and recorded by their staff and students

- b. ensuring that any new processes are properly risk assessed before implementation
- c. ensuring that all new equipment is checked for hazards, risk assessed and that users are trained on the required safe systems of work and risk control measures
- b. ensure that where risks cannot be eliminated, they are reduced to the lowest 'reasonably practicable' level
- c. monitor the implementation, operation and effectiveness of risk control measures through e.g. appropriate supervisory arrangements, inspections etc.
- d. ensure the provision of suitable information, instruction, training and supervision of staff, students (including visiting students) and academic visitors under their control taking into account their experience and skills
- e. ensure the safe handling and use of hazardous substances and the maintenance of safe plant, machinery and equipment under their control
- f. provide staff with access to health surveillance where identified in risk assessments
- g. ensure co-ordination and communication with co-investigators, research employees and others affected by research and teaching activities to enable health and safety risks to be effectively managed
- h. ensure all accidents and incidents are reported and investigated in accordance with agreed University arrangements and procedures
- i. take appropriate action when health and safety is likely to be compromised; if necessary, suspending an activity pending reassessment of the risk
- j. ensure compliance with the programme for statutory testing of all equipment used by their staff and students, including those statutory inspections (carried out by specialist engineers), user checks and regular weekly/monthly checks (carried out by their own trained staff and students) required for local exhaust ventilation, pressure systems, lifting equipment, fire extinguishers, elevators etc. and maintain records
- k. ensure that their staff and students comply with any policies or arrangements and procedures produced by the University, in particular those required for statutory compliance purposes
- l. maintain records of staff competence as they relate to the use of equipment and any hazardous substances in their respective areas of responsibility
- m. ensure that there are arrangements in place for ensuring the health and safety of students during undergraduate laboratory sessions

- n. ensure that they have appointed a suitable deputy to maintain appropriate supervision of the work under their control in their absence.

5.7. All members of staff

All members of staff shall

- a. take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing, and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions whilst at work.
- b. cooperate with the University on matters of health and safety to assist the University in fulfilling its statutory and common law duties of care.
- c. never intentionally misuse or recklessly interfere with anything provided in the interests of health, safety and wellbeing.
- d. ensure they report, through the appropriate mechanisms, any situation of which they are aware and know is likely to present significant risk to their own or any other person's health, safety or wellbeing, including all incidents.
- e. ensure they undertake activities and use equipment and facilities in accordance with health and safety information, instruction or training that has been provided to them.

5.8. Students

All students are responsible for:

- a. looking after their own health and safety and the safety of others who may be affected by their actions whilst on University premises or undertaking activities (e.g. fieldwork, work or study placements) under the supervision of the University and its subsidiary companies
- b. following the University's Health and Safety Policy and their Department's safety arrangements and procedures
- c. following any instructions given to them by an employee of the University for their health and safety
- d. reporting health and safety incidents or concerns pertaining to academic or University premises (including accidents, ill-health, premises hazards) in accordance with their Department and University procedures

- e. taking part in any health and safety training identified as necessary by the University, their Department or their academic supervisor
- f. ensuring they do not (without the consent of the member of staff in charge of the areas or activity) introduce any equipment for use on University premises, alter any fixed installations, alter or remove health and safety notices or equipment, or otherwise take any action which may create hazards for persons using the premises or employees of the University.

5.9. Contractors working for the University

Contractors working for the University shall:

- a. be responsible for ensuring the personnel they employ take reasonable care for their own health, safety and wellbeing, and that of others within the University who may be affected by the actions or omissions of the personnel they employ.
- b. cooperate with the University on matters of health and safety to assist the University in fulfilling its statutory and common law duties of care.
- c. ensure they report, through the appropriate mechanisms, any situation of which they are aware and know is likely to present significant risk to their health, safety or wellbeing, or that of any other person within the University.
- d. abide by the University's health and safety policy, and any procedures and arrangements of the School or Service that has engaged their services, as these relate to the activities under their control.

6. Compliance with laws and regulations

- a. All staff and other personnel must commit to complying with university level policy and national level laws and regulations on health and safety.
- b. Each category must be well aware about the responsibilities on health and safety.

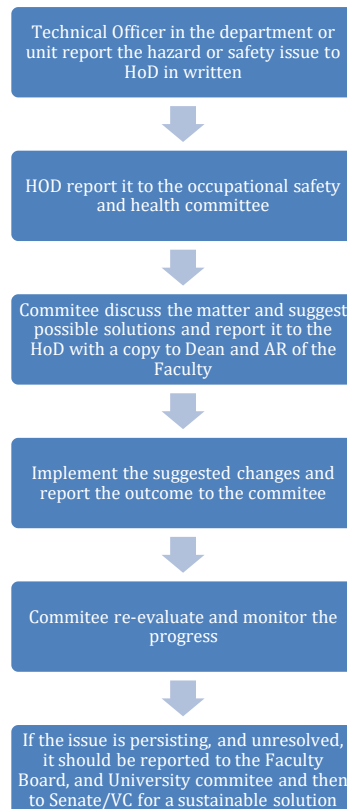
7. Appointment of Occupational safety and health committee

- a. Each faculty and unit should have a committee called "Occupational safety and health committee" (Chaired by an academic and convened by a technical officer). An academic and a non-academic member from each department must be members of it, while a student from each degree programme and wardens of the hostels of faculties also must be a member of it.

- b. The committee must have monthly meetings (or more frequently when an issue raised) under a Terms of Reference (TOR) defined specific to each faculty occupational and health safety issues.
- c. The TOR must include (specific to each faculty or unit)
 - 1. Procedure for risk assessment and hazard control
 - 2. Training and education
 - 3. Emergency preparedness
 - 4. Health and wellness programmes
 - 5. Reporting and investigation of incidents
 - 6. Monitoring and Evaluations
 - 7. Continuous improvement
 - 8. Communication
- a. All the matters arising in the faculty or unit should reached to this committee and decisions for resolving the issues need to be taken then and there for effective functioning.
- b. The university must have a committee called an “University Occupational safety and health committee” chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor and convened by while the chairpersons of each faculty and unit committees are members of it. This committee must meet on quarterly or when a need raised.

1. Risk assessment and Hazard control

- a. Each faculty and unit should have established system under this committee to identifying, assessing, and controlling workplace hazards and Implement measures for preventing accidents, injuries, and illnesses (eg – noticing the health and safety guidelines, operating procedure to act in emergencies, fire safety guidelines, laboratory safety guidelines etc.)



Training and Education

- a. The committee together with Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the faculty or unit must arrange at least a workshop quarterly, to train and educate the students and employees on safety procedures (eg – using fire extinguishers, laboratory safety guidelines, first aid and emergency management at workplaces and during field visits etc).
- b. This can be included into the faculty CPD programmes and budget can be requested from the Center for Quality Assurance or recurrent budget of the faculty, requested at the beginning of the year.

Emergency preparedness

- a. Each faculty, unit and main university premises must have outlined procedure for responding to emergencies, including the evaluation plans, first aid and communication protocols and further, information on the location and use of emergency equipment.

- b. All the information must be displayed which have the access to each individual and appropriate directions and necessary guidelines should be provided for necessary places.
- c. Emergency contact numbers and personnel should be well noticed to each individual who use the premises on notice boards.

Health and wellness programmes

- a. The committee must arrange programs and initiatives aimed at promoting employee health and well-being.
- b. Those programmes must include information on wellness activities, health screenings, and employee assistance programs as well (depending on the need survey or demands)

Reporting and investigation of incidents

- a. The committee must establish a clear process for reporting accidents, near misses, and other incidents and outline procedures for investigating incidents, identifying root causes, and implementing corrective actions as per the given flow chart.

Monitoring and Evaluations

- a. Each committee from faculties and units must report a progress report outlining the functions (activities, workshops, screening programmes arranged and incidents and solutions provided to the Faculty Board of respective faculties and cumulative report of all need to be tabled at the senate for the information and must be displayed for the information of entire university community.

Continuous improvements

- a. The committee should have to take steps to emphasize a commitment to continuous improvement in occupational safety and health and should encourage feedback from employees and stakeholders to identify areas for enhancement

Communication

- a. The committee must outline communication channels for sharing safety information, updates, and changes to procedures and stress the importance of open dialogue between management and employees regarding safety concerns.

Approvals

Approval body	Meeting no.	Date
Senate Standing Committee of Quality Assurance		
Senate		
Council		